

STREET PARISH COUNCIL

CIVIC PROTOCOL

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### **Introduction**

**1.1** This Civic Protocol is designed to assist the Chair, Vice Chair and Councillors to understand their roles and responsibilities and provide useful information to Councillors when undertaking civic duties.

### **Background**

**1.2** Street Parish Council has no Mayor. However, the Chair, Vice Chair and Councillors may on occasion be called on to represent Street Parish Council at civic functions and ceremonies.

### **The Leadership Role of the Chair**

**1.3** By virtue of their office, the Chair should seek to use their influence and standing in the role to encourage community pride in Street as not only a place to work and live, but as a destination to visit. They should also promote active voluntary and community organisations (and be supportive of their creation).

**1.4** The Chair is formally elected to the council by its members at the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council each May. A Vice Chair is also elected at this meeting. The term of office for both roles is one civic year, which runs until the next Annual Meeting of the Parish Council.

**1.5** The Chair may choose a consort, which can be a partner, a fellow councillor, a family member or a friend.

### **Civic Duties**

#### **2.1 The Chair can expect to undertake several civic duties:**

- Hosting council functions.
- Attending functions in Street such as presentations and official openings.
- Attending functions outside of Street as a representative of the village.

#### **2.2 The Chair also performs various duties in their ordinary role as Chair of the council:**

- Presiding over meetings of the Full Council.
- Presiding over the Annual Village Meeting.
- Maintaining professional standards of behaviour as is expected of all council members and set out in the Council's Code of Conduct.

*Full details of the role of the Chair are contained within the Standing Orders and Member Officer Protocol.*

### **Administration for Events**

**3.1** The Chair should meet with the Community Engagement Officer / Assistant Clerk in advance of the Annual Community Awards/Investiture to run through the format including meeting and greeting, the order of events and to liaise on arrangements for dignitary support.

**3.2** Invitations for the Chair should be directed to the Community Engagement Officer / Assistant Clerk. Where sent directly to the Chair the Chair shall forward to the Community Engagement Officer / Assistant Clerk as a courtesy to coordinate as required. The Community Engagement Officer / Assistant Clerk will then liaise with the Chair before an invitation is accepted or declined.

### **Office Support**

**3.3** The Clerk and Officers will provide guidance and support to the Chair to fulfil their role.

### **Support from the Vice Chair**

**4.1** The role of Vice Chair is to support the Chair throughout the year by representing the council when the Chair is unavailable.

**4.2** If the Chair is absent from a Full Council meeting, the Vice Chair shall preside.

**4.3** The Vice Chair has no formal standing when the Chair is present but assumes the precedence and standing of the Chair in a civic capacity.

**4.4** On receipt, invitations will be managed by the Community Engagement Officer and as such should not be sent to or solicited by the Vice Chair. The Vice Chair should not normally attend functions except when deputising for the Chair. Where the Vice Chair is invited to a function, it should be referred to the Community Engagement Officer as an invitation for the Town Mayor or Chair.

**4.5** If the Chair is unable to attend an engagement, the Vice Chair will be asked to deputise. Where the Vice Chair is unable to attend, the Chair or Vice Chair may nominate another councillor to serve as their representative.

### **Civic Insignia, Precedence and Protocol**

#### **Civic Insignia**

**5.1** The Chair's Chain of Office is the outward sign of civic office and may only be worn by the Chair.

**5.2** The Chair should wear the Chain of Office at ceremonial occasions, such as Civic Sunday, Remembrance Sunday and when hosting dignitaries, but is not expected to wear the Chain of Office during ordinary Parish Council or Committee Meetings (save for the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council and the Annual Village Meeting).

**5.3** If the Chair appointed is different to the previous year, handover of Chain of Office will be as follows:

- Outgoing Chair to wear the Chain of Office at the Investiture Ceremony up until they have delivered their speech at which point they will be required to hand the Chain of Office to the incoming Chair. *The Community Engagement Officer / Assistant Clerk will determine specific handover procedure depending on preferences and protocol.*
- Where there is no change in appointment, there is no requirement to remove the Chain of Office.
- Draft speeches (of up to 5 minutes) will be required in advance of the Investiture rehearsal and content agreed with the Community Engagement Officer.

**5.4** The Chair may also wear the Chain of Office when attending functions or undertaking duties when specifically invited to (this is usually stipulated on civic invitations).

The Chair should not wear the Chain of Office when in another area without the express invitation or permission from the council for that area.

**5.5** Civic insignia should never be worn with military uniform; It may be worn by a Chair who is a member of the clergy with full canonicals with the Chain of Office over the gown and it may be worn over academic dress.

**5.6** The Vice Chair may wear their insignia at civic events within Street or when deputising for the Chair. It is not expected to wear the insignia during ordinary Parish Council or Committee Meetings (save for the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council and the Annual Parish Meeting).

### **Precedence and Title**

**6.1** Precedence and protocol for visits/events may be set by custom and practice, except on Royal Visits where there is an established order. The Community Engagement Officer / Assistant Clerk will provide further guidance on precedence.

### **Acceptance of Gifts**

**6.2** In the course of the duty the Chair may be offered gifts. All Members should treat with caution any offer of a gift, favour or hospitality that is made to them personally. As is the case with members in general. The Chair remains subject to the council's Code of Conduct and the requirements for the registration of gifts above a certain value should be reported to the Somerset Council Monitoring Officer via the relevant paperwork.

**6.3** Be aware that the receipt of a gift/hospitality may be regarded as a personal interest and if a matter under consideration is likely to affect a person who gave you a gift or hospitality that must be declared at the meeting.

**6.4** The Clerk can provide further guidance with respect of the acceptance of gifts.

### **The Parish Council Cadet**

**7.1** The Council shall appoint a Parish Council Cadet from a youth organisation in Street including but not limited to: the Air Training Corps, Army Cadets, Fire and Rescue Cadets, YMCA, Scouts or Guides.

**7.2** The Parish Council will invite the Leader of the relevant organisations to nominate candidates to the position each February. The nominated cadet should generally be expected to be available to fulfil their term of office i.e. from May to May.

**7.3** The Parish Council shall review the nominations and appoint a Cadet to serve the next Civic Year by April 1st.

**7.4** The successful candidate will be appointed at the Annual Council Meeting and presented with a badge of office, and subsequently invited to the Community Awards & Investiture Ceremony to formally accept their role. Their appointment shall run until the appointment of the next Cadet.

#### **7.5 The Parish Council Cadet duties will be:**

- Attendance at the Annual Community Awards and Investiture.
- Participation in official Processions / Civic Services.
- Involvement in the Remembrance Sunday Parade and Services.
- Handover to the incoming cadet in conjunction with the Community Engagement Officer.
- Supporting other occasions as requested by the Parish Council.

**7.6** It is anticipated opportunities will arise for the cadet to attend a variety of local cultural and community events though the Cadet's education must take priority.

**7.7** The Cadet should inform the Community Engagement Officer in advance if they are unable to attend any function.

*See Street Parish Council's Safeguarding Policy.*

## **Guidance on support provided by the Community Engagement Officer**

### **The Civic List**

The Civic List shall be used to invite people to Civic functions.

This is managed by the Community Engagement Officer / Assistant Clerk who is tasked with maintaining an up-to-date database, updating it at least every June.

Former Councillors shall be asked (where possible) if they wish to remain on the Civic List in the June following ordinary elections. All invitations are to include partners and encourage an alternative representative of the body to attend as necessary. The Chair is entitled to extend invitations to a reasonable number of personal friends and family to Parish Council Civic Events.

### **Civic Dignitaries**

**Most importantly, as a community focused council Street Parish Council aim to invite active participation from members of the community.**

Also invited

- All current Parish Councillors.
- Former Parish Councillors.
- The Member of Parliament for Street.
- Other community representatives on the active Civic List as managed by the Community Engagement Officer / Assistant Clerk.
- Community Engagement Officer / Assistant Clerk will liaise with the Chair around reciprocal invitation for a civic event in Street.

## **Community Awards and Investiture**

### **Meeting Format**

The Annual Meeting of the Parish Council takes place in May each year prior to the Community Awards and Investiture. This is a formal meeting of the Parish Council and focuses on the statutory or annual business of the Council (appointment of committees etc).

The Community Awards and Investiture focuses primarily on the Community Awards but also provides the opportunity to mark the appointment of the Chair and gives thanks to the outgoing Chair. This event will take place no sooner than two weeks after the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council and the date is set by the Community Engagement Officer.

### **The Civic Year**

- Annual Meeting of the Parish Council (May Parish Council Meeting).
- Annual Village Meeting.
- Community Awards/ Annual Investiture.
- Remembrance Parade (this is not an obligation, and participation can be managed by nomination of fellow Councillor).
- Festive Market.
- Discover Your Community.

Other/alternative events may include:

#### **Annual Tea**

*For all former Chairs who are still contactable and able to attend, to thank those past and present who have served the community.*

#### **Showcase Street**

*To welcome dignitaries, raise the profile of Street as a place to live, work and visit, and foster relations with nearby Mayors/Chairs. Suggested bi-annually / each Council term.*

#### **Approval of events**

The Culture and Events Committee will put forward to full council a calendar of proposed events for the next civic year. Approval by full council will be subject to budget consideration, Officer time, and sufficient volunteer Cllrs to deliver each event.

#### **Other events**

There may be precedents where a Councillor historically attends an event, and this is locally managed by Officers.

### **Receptions**

The Chair will host several civic receptions during the year including:

- Meet and Greet at Annual Community Award.
- Twinning Association Events.
- Refreshments following Community Awards for invited guests and the wider public.